



## Because He Was the Weakest by FinishedFics

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**Summary:** (After the conversation with Bev and before their decision to follow Mike to the clubhouse, the Losers get a few hours of sleep in the inn.) "Rich!" Eddie's sharp whisper brought him halfway back. Richie stirred under the comforter, letting out a low groan. "Rich, you awake?" "Mmhm..." "I think there's something in my room."

## Because He Was the Weakest

*Written by Sara K.*

(A/N) I know that in Chapter Two we're supposed to assume that everyone left straight from the townhouse after they talk with Beverly to go to the clubhouse but I wanted to write this fic so in this they sleep in their clothes and leave bright in the morning with Mike. *Please don't jump on me for that.* Also, comments are my lifeblood, you guys make my day with your kind words, thank you guys so much for reading!

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Mike had told them to get some sleep about an hour ago.

No one seemed to really unpack or properly prepare for bed at all. Once each room's individual door had been shut, there wasn't much noise left in the townhouse. Richie swore he had heard the bathwater run in Bill's room next door, but it only ran for a few seconds before being quickly shut off. Some shuffling came and then it was silent once again.

Richie had taken off his pants and tossed his over-shirt off to the side with them, deciding he would just slip both of them back on in a few hours when they left for god knows where Mike was taking them in the morning.

He had collapsed into the large bed, sinking into it like a marshmallow. After tossing his glasses on the nightstand and flicking off the lamp, Richie focused on trying to fall asleep. He curled up as tightly as he could, burying his face into the pillow and tuning out the rattling hum of the old townhouse's radiator.

It was dark and quiet.

He hated it.

Richie did everything to blur out the images that kept flashing in front of him. At first, he saw vague things from years ago; terrifying things. Things that hadn't quite taken shape yet in his memory but

the emotion was there. The terror. Then he saw the restaurant and Mike beating the table with the chair. Everyone watching and screaming. Absolutely helpless. Finally, he saw Stanley.

Richie let out a harsh breath, squinting his eyes closed as tightly as he could.

Stan.

*"Jesus."*

His imagination wouldn't stop trying to recreate what they had heard on the phone. He tried to imagine what Stan might've looked like now. He tried to imagine him with his wife and Mike giving him that phone call. He tried to imagine his voice and his trembling hands and finally the despair consuming him whole. He tried to imagine the bathtub. The blood. His last thoughts. His fear.

Except he didn't try to imagine any of it. It was just there, in his head, subconsciously building the emotional torture for him.

Richie wiped his eyes dry, keeping them closed as he did.

Time went on when finally, Richie felt sleep coming for him. The weight in his chest seemed to drift off with him as he fell deeper and deeper into his pillow; welcoming the sweet distraction of sleep. Just as he was standing on the edge of unconsciousness, a voice broke through the stilled air.

*"Rich!"*

The sharp whisper brought him halfway back. Richie stirred under the comforter, letting out a low groan.

*"Rich, you awake?"*

*"Mmhm..."*

*"I think there's something in my room."*

Richie rubbed his eyes, forcing himself painfully back into reality. He dragged his head out of the pillow and rested himself on his forearms

in the mattress. Slipping back on his glasses, Richie blinked in the dark before making out Eddie's familiar shape standing beside the bed.

"You what?" Richie said loudly. A gruff grogginess still gripping at his voice.

*"I think there's something in my room."* Eddie whispered again.

He rubbed the side of his face. "What are you talking about?"

*"I mean I think there's something in my room asshole."*

"There's nothing in your room."

*"Seriously? You're gonna tell me that after the fucking fortune cookie shit?!"*

Richie looked at the genuine panic in Eddie's face. He'd gotten good at being able to tell when Eddie was overreacting or if it was a real concern. Usually, it was the former. But right now, it seemed like he was quite sure of his fear.

He stayed watching Eddie's face in the dark room for a few more seconds before finally tearing his eyes away from him. Richie threw over the comforter, dragging himself out of the warm bed and into the ice cold room. Eddie waited for him to collect himself as he scratched at the collar his shirt nervously. Richie stretched out his arms and back, refusing to bother with his mess of bed hair as he scooped his phone out of the pockets of his discarded pants. He flicked on the flashlight function and looked around the space.

Eddie's eyes followed him across the room. *"What're you doing?"*

"Looking."

The townhouse had odd antiques all over the place; up against the wall or displayed on tables. Every room seemed to have a weird distinguishable theme. Richie's room just so happened to be the 'Golf Room'. When he finally spotted the bag of old iron golf clubs hung on the wall, Richie grabbed the handle of the largest one and pulled it free.

*"What're you gonna do with that?"*

"What did you want me to do? Just go in there with my fucking phone?"

*"Wait, you're going in there?"*

Richie rolled his eyes, tossing the golf club on his shoulder before swiftly turning back to the door and heading into the hallway.

*"Rich! Richie wait!"*

The sound of Eddie's quiet tight footsteps quickly appeared behind Richie's loud wide ones. The two of them took the few strides over to the room next door.

*"Hold on-"* Eddie grabbed his upper arm, stopping Richie from reaching for the doorknob. He moved closer, shifting his voice from a whisper to a low hushed tone. "Shouldn't we wake up the others?"

"I'm sure they'll wake up if you start screaming."

Eddie's eyes went wide. "Wha- why would I be screaming?"

"Anything worth waking them up for that might be in this room would be something you'd scream at; so don't worry about it."

"That's not funny."

"Kinda is." He shrugged.

Eddie shook his head. "You're a dick."

Richie pulled out of his grasp and got a hold of the doorknob. Eddie watched over his shoulder as the door slowly creaked inwards, disappearing in the dark cramped room. The floorboards groaned beneath his bare feet as Richie took a step inside. Using the flash from his phone, he found the light switch against the wall beside him.

Richie flicked it upwards. Nothing.

"Yeah, the lights went out earlier right before I heard the noise."

"How'd you know the lights went out?"

"I had them on."

Richie turned back to Eddie; a sly smirk on his lips. "You were sleeping with the lights on?"

"I'm sorry Richie, we have a fucking killer clown after us and you're gonna call me a little bitch for leaving the lights on? Fuck you."

Just then, there was a loud clatter sound that exploded from the back of the room. Eddie let out a sharp-edged gasp and jumped behind Richie; grabbing his upper arm again. Richie threw the light towards the noise; his heart pounding in his ears as he scanned the floor for something, but there was nothing to be seen.

*"I think it's behind the nightstand."* Eddie had switched back to whispering.

Richie stayed put for a few seconds. He gripped the golf club's handle tightly in his hand as Eddie's breath quickened behind him. He eyed the nightstand before finally making his way deeper inside.

*"Rich!"*

*"Stay here."* He whispered back as he crept further across the wood floor.

*"Richie come back!"* Eddie had folded his arms over his chest, holding himself tightly as he stood in the doorway. *"Let's go get Mike or Bill - Rich!"*

The cold air of the room nipped at his skin as Richie went deeper. He held out the light and lifted the neck of the club just slightly off of his shoulder. His eyes frantically searched the space with each step.

***SHET SHET SHET***

Eddie and Richie jumped when the loud scraping sound cut through the air from the back wall. Eddie was right, it seemed to be coming

from behind the nightstand. The chilling noise continued as Richie leaned down. He listened for a moment before looking over the small wooden frame of the stand.

Eddie watched him with horrified eyes, his feet still glued behind the doorframe. "*Rich...*"

With his phone in his hand, Richie reached behind the stand. He took in a deep breath, collecting himself as he summoned his next bout of courage. Then, in one hard pull, Richie yanked the stand from the wall. Casting the light downwards and throwing the golf club up overhead, Richie was ready to attack whatever lay on the other side when suddenly, he froze.

"*Richie?*" Eddie leaned forward.

"Oh my god."

"*What is it man?*"

Richie tossed the golf club onto the bed beside him, keeping his eyes on what Eddie couldn't see. Eddie stared at Richie until he suddenly ducked down, disappearing behind the nightstand.

There was some shuffling. Eddie could see the light from Richie's phone flicker before it suddenly turned off, plunging the room back into darkness.

"Richie! Are you okay?!"

"Holy shit."

That's when he suddenly reappeared from behind the stand. Eddie's eyes followed Richie's tall figure as he made his way back around towards him, something clasped between his hands.

"What is it? What are you doing?!"

He planted his feet in front of Eddie, a look of horror over his face as he stared at his closed hands.

Eddie stayed still. "What the fuck is that man?"



Richie met his gaze before slowly extending his hands out to him.

"Rich..."

"Just look."

"I don't wanna look!"

Arms still shaking, Richie snapped open his hands slightly, a small fuzzy head popped out from his grasp and let out a high pitched squeak.

"FUCK!" Eddie screamed, leaping backwards and covering his face.

"It's a fucking mouse dumbass." Richie said flatly.

"You're Satan." Eddie heaved, crossing his arms and glaring back up at him. "You're fucking Satan."

"I'm Satan?" Richie scoffed. "It's a mouse. You literally woke me up in the middle of the night because you got scared by a baby mouse."

"Can you just get rid of it?"

"There's like a big hole in the wall back behind the stand. I think he chewed through the wires. That's probably why the lights went out." The little creature squirmed and squeaked in Richie's grasp as he looked it over. "I bet there's like a million more of these guys in here. This place isn't exactly up to code."

"Why are you holding it?"

"To show you."

"Yeah, I saw it. Now get rid of it."

"You still scared of a little mouse?"

"Do you know how many fucking diseases those things can carry? And you're just letting one sit in your fucking hand."

"You don't have any diseases do you little guy?" Richie held the mouse up to his face. "Do you? Huh?"

"Richie-"

"How much would you pay me to kiss him?"

"If you put that thing anywhere near your mouth I will throw up."

"Fine." He chuckled. "Let's let him outside."

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The rest of the townhouse was just as dark and quiet. Richie had let Eddie take his phone from him and light up the stairs as they went downwards. Once they got to the front door, Eddie threw it open and stepped back, keeping himself as far away from mouse as possible.

Richie moved up to the doorway before turning back around. "You don't wanna give your roommate a final farewell?"

"I will chuck it out myself if you try and put that thing near me again."

Richie laughed through his smile as he turned back to the open air. "Goodbye little buddy."

Bending down, Richie opened his hands. The tiny mouse scrambled out of his palms and raced off into the street. The two of them stood in the doorway, watching it disappear into the dark.

The air stilled out between them as they kept their eyes on the night. Time ticking on as they stayed in place.

"I'm sorry man."

Richie shut the door and turned around, surprised at Eddie's sudden change of tone. "For what?"

"I was scared shitless of a *mouse*." Eddie ran his hands over his face, letting out a long deep breath. "I'm just on edge. Everything's getting to me."

"To be fair, you're always on edge."

"Fuck you."

Richie laughed again. "It's okay. I think we're all in the same boat; which is completely understandable given the Pennywise trip we had at the Chinese place." He patted Eddie on the shoulder, taking his phone back from him before turning to the staircase, ready to head back up to his room.

"I can't stop thinking about Stanley."

Richie stopped in place. He turned back around to see Eddie hadn't moved; his eyes still on the front door. Richie bit the inside of his lip as he stood there, watching him a second to try and let the words come to him. His heart lurched forwards at the thought of Eddie in the same place he was an hour ago; forced imagination racing to create the nightmare of reality.

"Me too." He answered quietly.

Eddie turned back around to see Richie's eyes on his feet, his chin buried against his chest. "It's not fair."

"No." Richie shook his head, taking a broken breath. "No, it's not."

"You alright Rich?"

"I think I'm as alright as the rest of us." He sighed. "Everything's just so fucked." Richie looked back at Eddie's worried eyes. "What about you?"

He simply shook his head. "The longer we stay here the more I remember him and the more..."

Richie nodded. He understood. It was all coming back to him too. The heartbreak deepening the more they remembered what they were missing.

The radiator rattled above them as they stood in the dark lobby, neither wanting to move much.

Finally, Eddie shrugged. "I don't think I can go back in there."

Richie's eyes raised back off the ground to meet his. He adjusted his glasses, thinking a second before clearing his throat. "Well...if you

want, you can sleep in my room."

"Haha, very funny."

"I'm being serious."

Eddie eyed him back, a grin breaking over him. "Nice try asshole but I'm not six. Way to fuck with me right now."

"I'm not fucking with you."

"Alright sure." He crossed his arms.

Richie let out a tired sigh, turning back towards the stairs. "Fine then, sleep down here if you want."

Eddie watched him begin to climb the steps before jumping forwards. "Wait! Rich!"

He stopped against the railing. "What?"

"You're not fucking with me?"

"No man, I'm not fucking with you."

Eddie presses his lips together, thinking before finally giving a curt nod. Richie watched as he held his chin high, climbing the stairs up past him. He couldn't help but smile, following after Eddie.

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"You can sleep on that side." He pointed.

Once Eddie was under the covers was when Richie flicked off the lights. He then maneuvered to the other end, peeling back the comforter and climbing inside. Richie had to pull himself closer to the edge, not particularly familiar with sharing a bed with someone. Once his glasses were tossed back on the nightstand, Richie rolled onto his side, facing away from Eddie.

"Night Rich."

"Night Eds."

The two drifted into silence again. The rattling radiator carrying on.

Richie couldn't fall back into sleep. Something was tugging at him that kept him awake. He had suddenly become very aware of Eddie's presence in the bed with him. No reason why. He didn't make much noise and he wasn't moving around. But Richie couldn't stop focusing on him. The weight in the mattress beside him and the soft breathing distracted Richie like no other. He just laid curled in his pillow, eyes half open in the dark.

"Richie."

His name was mumbled quietly from the covers beside him. Richie half jumped at the sudden noise, thinking Eddie was asleep.

"What's up buddy?"

"You said he got to Stan first because...because he was the weakest."

"Yeah." Richie sighed, feeling the guilt weigh in his chest. "I shouldn't have said that."

"It's true though." Eddie paused, taking a breath. "What if I'm next?"

Richie's eyes went wide. "Why are you saying that?"

"Come on Rich. You know in the order it would have to me next. I'm not like Bill or Bev or you. I'm nothing like you guys."

Richie paused for only a second before rolling over. He met Eddie's eyes in the pillow beside him, looking over his face before speaking.

"I don't know if you know this but in the parking lot tonight I was the first one who tried to bail."

"Yeah but you're...Richie come on. You're *you*. You're scared but you don't give a shit. I'm not like that."

"Sure you are."

"No, I'm not."

"Listen," Richie had noticed Eddie's hand rested in front of his face. Then, without even thinking about it, he had grabbed hold of it. His eyes still on Eddie. "Yeah, you are. And who cares even if you weren't. What happened to Stanley was cause he was alone. Us, all of us aren't alone alright? We're together. So no matter what, we're gonna be fine. Together."

Eddie's gaze stayed fixated on Richie, soaking up his words.

Richie felt his heart skip a beat when Eddie tightened his own grip on his hand. The two holding hands a moment before Richie quickly cleared his throat and pulled away from Eddie, his attention still facing him.

"Okay?"

"Okay."

Their eyes stayed on each other as the seconds ticked by. A sudden fear swelled in Richie chest. The same fear that had swelled when he pulled his hand away a moment ago and when Eddie's wedding ring glinted in the dark. It's was a dumb fear he didn't know the source of, but it stung.

God, had it stung.

"Get some sleep man. Who knows when Mike wants us up." Richie nodded before rolling onto his back, resting his hands up under his head.

His eyes focused on the ceiling in front of him as Eddie shifted where he was. He didn't roll over though. Eddie stayed put facing Richie.

Eventually, Eddie's soft snores took the air. It was a nice sound, Richie had concluded. Sleep was starting to make its way around his edges as he listened to it.

That's when a small weight appeared on top of his waist. The sudden foreign physical contact shook Richie awake. He noticed the mattress had suddenly dipped down beside him as a heat pressed up against his side. He snapped downwards to see what it was. Richie's eyes went wide as he stared down at -Eddie.

He was still snoring, completely asleep. Eddie had shifted over and curled up into Richie's side, his hand lightly resting on top of him.

Richie went completely still, just lying there watching Eddie closely. He didn't have time to reel from his shock though when Eddie suddenly pulled his head up, resting it back down on top of Richie's chest. He felt his heart skip several times as Eddie lazily dragged his hand across his stomach and curled at his waist, pulling himself up close. Richie's face went hot as he stayed unmoving, letting Eddie nuzzle over him.

His chest was light as his focus was pinpointed on Eddie. His breathing, his weight, his warmth. It was a sudden and unexpected comfort.

That's when the memories started to flood back to him. Richie had imagined this before. A long time ago.

He had? Why?

But this wasn't like the fiction he used to fantasize over. This was real.

Richie's heart was thumping so hard he was worried it would wake Eddie up, forcing him to move off of him.

He didn't want that.

Why?

Richie wasn't a big fan of personal attention. He preferred to keep his space from people, something he was sure his therapist had an answer for. If someone had fallen asleep on him like this he would've shoved them off by now.

But this wasn't just someone.

This was Eddie.

It was like a floodgate opened in his head. More of those vague faded memories began to clear once again. But less so moments. No, he didn't remember the moments, just the feeling. This strong feeling.

The feeling he had for...him.

Eddie stirred again, pulling himself tighter to Richie's waist.

Richie felt his breath catch in his throat as he waited for Eddie to release. But he didn't. He stayed there. Close and safe.

Hesitantly, Richie pulled one hand out from under his head and turned his eyes back on Eddie. Hovering the arm over Eddie's shoulder for a moment, Richie finally decided to rest it down on top of him.

He closed his eyes, waiting for Eddie to suddenly awaken. But he didn't. He stayed fast asleep.

A broken smile took Richie's mouth and eyes. A desperately happy smile that he couldn't explain. There was a feeling, he felt it back at the restaurant when he saw everyone there and they were happy and good -it felt like coming home. Richie had never felt a feeling quite like it. He hated his real home. It was cold and empty. Even his family's home felt the same. But with everyone sitting around that table he felt like he had just come home. His real home. It was the feeling of right. The feeling of warmth. The feeling of love.

Richie felt that here again, right now, with Eddie curled around him and his own arm protectively wrapped over his shoulder.

It was a piece of him he had forgotten about that fell back into place.

He never wanted to move again.

Then the familiar sinking feeling fell on top of Richie. Realizing he would never have this. Realizing he would never even be able to *talk* about this. Realizing Eddie was probably thinking of his wife right now. Realizing that for Eddie this didn't mean the same thing as it did to Richie. And now the guilt came in. The disgust and anger he had for himself.

God. Why did he feel this way?

"Richie..."



He looked down at his muffled voice as Eddie had pressed his name against his shirt and into his chest. Eddie's voice was tired, half asleep. Just barely awake to make a comment that for some reason was important enough to blink open his sleep ridden eyes.

"Yeah man?"

"You smell nice."

Richie felt his eyes well up. He let out an empty relieved laugh and rubbed Eddie's shoulder.

"Thanks Eds."